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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a description and evaluation of the Ethnic Heritage Learning Resource Center, a program designed to provide a concentrated and personalized enrichment program of instruction to children showing severe reading deficiencies. Approximately 1,200 fourth and fifth graders drawn from eight schools in New York City participated. The Center used special ethnic materials, special procedures, and para-professionals. Each of the eight schools sent its own selected students to the center at least three times a week for a full day. There, the children learned about African or Hispanic culture and participated in reading related activities. Program evaluation consisted of a site visit conducted at the end of the project period, and of an examination of documents related to program implementation. Although the first evaluation objective called for a 100% sample of all 1200 children in the program, complete pre and post test scores of only 64 children were supplied from one of the eight schools involved. Findings indicate that the 64 children surveyed showed substantial reading growth over the course of the academic year. Even if the figures were more representative of the population, there is no clear proof that this growth is due to the program alone. (Author/AM)

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EVALUATION REPORT FOR B/E FUNCTION NUMBER NUMBER 20-53437

ETHNIC HERITAGE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

February 13, 1975 -- June 26, 1975

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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An evaluation of selected New York City Umbrella Programs funded under a Special Grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1974-1975 school year.

Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, Director

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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Chapter 1

THE PROGRAM

This program involved approximately 1200 students drawn from eight schools in School District 12 in New York City. These students were primarily fourth and fifth graders ranging in age from 9-12 who were individually selected for this remediation and enrichment project on the basis of their reading scores. It was the aim of the project to provide a concentrated and personalized enrichment program of instruction that would enable these children to overcome severe reading deficiencies.

The experimental program involved utilization of existing facilities at 708 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, N.Y., at no expense to the program. A museum-like study center has been developed to interest the children in their predominantly African or Hispanic heritage. Funding for this part of the total program was used to employ four paraprofessionals who assisted four program managers (teachers). The teachers were employed under a separate Special Needs Program, Chapter 241. Additional money was used in the present program to purchase textbooks, supplies, postage, telephone fees, and carfare. The coordinator, who was director of the center, was paid from other funds.

The rationale for the program was that the introduction of quality ethnic materials, when properly utilized, could bridge the gap between the educationally advantaged and disadvantaged. This project, using paraprofessionals to assist teachers in an interdisciplinary approach to ethnic studies, would serve to motivate and remediate students. The special materials and procedures would hopefully involve the interests of children of African and Hispanic origins as well as children of other ethnic backgrounds. Such involvement combined with an individualized approach to reading-related activities would significantly improve their reading.

This part of the total program, involving the use of four paraprofessional assistants, began on February 15, 1975 and was concluded at the end of the school year, June 26, 1975. During this period, each of the eight schools sent its own selected students to the Center three times a week for a full day. The Center serviced approximately 60 children each day. An interview with the director revealed that most children were able to visit the Center four or five times during the entire academic year, or at least twice since the February funding date for this part of the total program.

During their visit to the Center, children were encouraged to learn about the general culture of peoples of African or Hispanic heritage. A tour of the Center confirmed that a remarkable collection of cultural exhibits and artifacts had been assembled in a participatory museum-like setting. The facilities and atmosphere were conducive to extended study and reflection, with teachers and assistants available to capitalize on reading-related activities. With the aid of audio-visual equipment, children were shown a representative sampling of the history, geography, economy, and the arts of African and Hispanic cultures.

Project money provided for the purchase of educational material directly related to the furtherance of reading skills and small group instruction. It also allowed the project to hire four paraprofessionals to aid the four regular teachers in grouping children for instruction in reading. These assistants worked on curriculum materials, maintained individual progress files on each child, provided bilingual services to the teachers, and carried out reading and learning activities with individuals or small groups of children under the supervision of the regular teachers. There was additional coordination and travel to the individual schools by teachers and assistants to follow-up on children seen at the Center and to conduct demonstration

lessons.

Chapter II

EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine whether, as a result of participation in the program, the reading grade of the students shows a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

Subjects: All participants in the program.

Methods and Procedures: The appropriate forms of the city-wide administered reading tests (Metropolitan Achievement Test 4/74, and NYC Reading Test 4/75) to be used to assess changes in reading.

Analysis of Data: Data to be analyzed with a correlated t test design.

Evaluation Objective #2: To evaluate the extent to which the program, as actually carried out, coincided with the program as described in the project proposal.

Subjects: All participants in the program.

Methods and Procedures: In order to evaluate the quality and extent to which the program was implemented, close monitoring of the program to be carried out by conducting a site visit at the end of the project period; by examining rosters containing lists of personnel working in the project, along with other documents related to the implementation of the program; and by maintaining contact with the project coordinator in order to obtain data on all aspects of the functioning of the project.

Analysis of Data: A statement concerning the extent of implementation of the program to be made, and, where serious discrepancies exist between proposal and program, provide a description of those discrepancies.

Several limiations were imposed on these evaluation procedures because of delays in implementing the evaluation design, and because the specific funding for this proposal is but a small part of the support for the Center project as a whole. Although the first evaluation objective calls for a 100% sample of all 1200 children in the program, that data was not available following a reasonable period of time. Instead, complete pre and post test scores for 64 children were supplied from one of the eight schools involved (C.S. 50). These are in all likelihood fourth and fifth grade children who are presumably typical of program participants. Summary data on this group is presented in Chapter III. With reference to Evaluation Objective #2, monitoring of the program was confined to a final site visit and discussion of the project with the program coordinator.

Chapter III

FINDINGS

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine whether, as a result of participation in the program, the reading grade of the students will show a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores.

An intact sample of only 64 children from one school was used to make pre-post comparisons. Scores on the 1975 N.Y.C. Reading Test were converted to MAT equivalents with the assistance of experimental conversion tables provided by the Office of Educational Evaluation. A t test for correlated means was performed between pre and post measures. Table I summarizes the principal results. As will be noted, a significant difference exists between the pre and post means, $t_{.05(63)} = 5.46$. If these 64 children are a representative sample of the 1200 children in the program, then substantial and significant reading growth occurred (average increase = .71 grade level equivalents). However, this is only 5% of the program population.

TABLE 1

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATED T TEST

BETWEEN PRE AND POST TESTINGS, N=64

Item	Pre	Post
Mean	2.65	3.36
S.D.	.94	1.19
t Score	5.46*	

*p.< .05

Evaluation Objective #2: To evaluate the extent to which the program, as actually carried out, coincided with the program as described in the project proposal.

With the exception of difficulties encountered in the execution of the evaluation design, as noted above, there appeared to be no major discrepancies between the project as proposed and that implemented. Inspection of the facilities demonstrated that the Center was providing an invaluable resource for the development of academic and reading interests. However, it was not possible to evaluate implementation as an ongoing process.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Objective #1 was not fulfilled because only 5% of the proposed 100% sample were evaluated on a pre-post basis. This is not an adequate sample of the program population, nor is there any assurance that the sample

is truly representative of the group. With these reservations in mind, it should be noted that the 64 children surveyed showed substantial reading growth over the course of an academic year. It would be very difficult, however, to attribute this growth to the program alone, even if these figures were more truly representative. In the judgment of the present evaluator, visits to the Cultural Center on a twice-a-semester basis are not sufficient experience to account for any reading growth, even if followed up with coordinated lessons in the referring school. Nonetheless, statistically significant gains were found in the restricted sample. This may well be due to the important motivating experience this Center provides for stimulating reading interests with concomitant growth in reading skills.

Evaluation Objective #2 was partially achieved. Materials appear to have arrived and played a role in the working of the program. According to the coordinator's report, the four paraprofessionals were important adjuncts to the small-group instructional process. Yet evaluation monitoring was not available during the course of the academic year, and pre-post reading test data was not collected systematically.

It is the recommendation of the present evaluator that the program be continued for the next academic year, but only under the condition that a more systematic data collection procedure is instituted. The lack of data for this evaluation makes any conclusion tenuous indeed. Furthermore, the evaluator recommends that in future evaluation designs less emphasis should be paid to objectives requiring documented reading growth <u>directly</u> attributable to experiences at the Center. More indirect means might be found to show increased motivation and interest as a result of these experiences. This is a worthwhile and important cultural program which is in need of better means for assessing its contribution to the lives of children.

Use Table 28 for norm referenced achievement data not applicable to Table 26. (See "Instructions" Item 5 before completing this table.)

28. Standardized Test Results

In the table below, enter the requested assessment information about the tests used to evaluate the effectiveness of major project components/activities in achieving desired objectives. Before completing this form, read all footnotes. Attach additional sheets if necessary. [27]

Component Code	Activity Code	Test Used 1/	Form		Level		Total N 2/	Group ID 3/	Number Tested		Pretest			Posttest			Statistical Data		Subgroup 9/
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post			4/ N	5/	Date	Mean	6/ SD	Date	Mean	6/ SD	7/ Test	8/ Value	
6 0 8 1 4	7 1 5	MAT-58					1200	14	64	1	5/74	2.65	.94	5/75	3.36	1.19	t	5.46	

1/ Identify test used and year of publication (MAT-58; CAT-70, etc.)
2/ Total number of participants in the activity.
3/ Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 5). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
4/ Total number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations.
5/ 1 = grade equivalent; 2 = percentile rank; 3 = z score; 4 = Standard score (publisher's); 5 = stanine; 6 = raw score; 7 = other.
6/ SD = Standard Deviation
7/ Test statistics (e.g., t; F; X^2).
8/ Obtained value
9/ Provide data for the following groups separately: Neglected (code as N), Delinquent (code as D), and Handicapped (code as H). Place the indicated code letter in the last column to signify the subgroup evaluated.